

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. Applicant name and address:

City of Helena
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623

2. Type of action: Application to Change City of Helena Water Reservation Water Right No. 41I 30148066 by adding an additional well point of diversion.

3. Water source name: Groundwater

4. Location affected by project: City of Helena within City limits.

Hill Park and Women's Park located in the North half of Section 30, Township 10 North, Range 3 West, Lewis and Clark County.

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits: The DNRC shall issue a change authorization if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-402 MCA are met.

Applicant proposes to add one groundwater well point of diversion to the City of Helena Water Reservation (41I 72581) for irrigation of 4.8 acres in Hill Park and Women's Park. The proposal is to utilize 350 GPM of the reserved flow rate and 12.0 AF of the reserved volume. Current irrigation of the proposed place of use occurs from treated city water, and the proposed project will allow irrigation to occur from untreated groundwater.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment: None

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity - Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.

Determination: No Impact

The source is groundwater from the Helena Valley Aquifer, and a flow rate and volume in excess of the project has already been approved by the City of Helena Water Reservation final order and determined to not have a significant impact on surface water in the assessment done for the Water Reservation.

Water quality - Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.

Determination: No impact.

The source is groundwater.

Groundwater - Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.

Determination: No impact.

The project proposes to utilize a portion of the City of Helena Water Reservation. The determination regarding the Water Reservation indicated that the flow rate and volume granted, under which the proposed flow rate and volume are included, would not have a significant impact on groundwater availability from this aquifer and no significant impact to connected surface water would occur.

DIVERSION WORKS - Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.

Determination: No impact.

The new well was drilled within the developed area of Hill Park.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."*

Determination: No Impact.

The project involves existing turf irrigation within city limits. No change in land use will result in no impacts to any wildlife or native plant life. No significant impact to surface water is expected.

Wetlands - *Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

Determination: No impact.

The project does not involve wetlands.

Ponds - *For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.*

Determination: No impact.

The project does not involve ponds.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - *Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.*

Determination: No impact.

The project involves existing turf irrigation within city limits.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - *Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.*

Determination: No impact.

The project involves turf grass irrigation in areas where noxious weeds are actively controlled.

AIR QUALITY - Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

Determination: No impact.

The project involves existing turf grass in developed areas.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.

Determination: NA- The project is not located on State or Federal lands.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.

Determination: No further impact identified.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

Determination: No impact.

The project is consistent with increased usability of city parks.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.

Determination: No impact.

The project will increase the usability of recreational facilities.

HUMAN HEALTH - Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: No impact.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.

Yes___ No_**x**__ If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: No impact.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? No impact.
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No impact.
- (c) Existing land uses? No impact.
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No impact.
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No impact.
- (f) Demands for government services? No impact.
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No impact.
- (h) Utilities? No impact.
- (i) Transportation? No impact.
- (j) Safety? No impact.
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? No impact.

2. *Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*

Secondary Impacts None identified.

Cumulative Impacts None identified.

3. *Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:* No mitigation or stipulations are necessary.

4. *Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:* No human or environmental impacts exist as a result of the proposed action, and the no action alternative is reduced usability of city parks.

PART III. Conclusion

1. *Preferred Alternative* No preferred alternatives identified.

2 *Comments and Responses* None at this time.

3. Finding:

Yes___ No_**x**___ Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis because no significant adverse impacts were identified for the proposed project.

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Russ Gates
Hydrologist/Water Resource Specialist
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